

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,**

**Plaintiff,**

**vs.**

**TODD J. LAWSON,**

**Defendant.**

**Case No. 17-CR-30149-SMY-1**

**ORDER**

**YANDLE, District Judge:**

Before the Court is Defendant Todd J. Lawson's Motion for Court Order of Guilty Plea (Doc. 47). Lawson seeks a copy of his guilty plea and transcript of the change of plea hearing in order to pursue a Motion to Vacate, Set Aside, or Correct Sentence pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2255.<sup>1</sup> Defendants have no constitutional right to a complimentary copy of any document in their court files. *See United States v. Groce*, 838 F. Supp. 411, 413, 414 (E.D. Wis. 1993). For that reason, before providing copies free of charge, a district court may require the requestor to show: (1) that he has exhausted *all* other means of access to his files (*i.e.*, through his trial and appellate counsel); (2) that he is financially unable to secure access to his court files (*i.e.*, through a showing similar to that required in 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(2) which includes a certified copy of the prisoner's trust account for the previous six-month period prior to filing); and (3) that the documents requested are necessary for some specific non-frivolous court action. *See United States v. Wilkinson*, 618 F.2d 1215, 1218-19 (7th Cir. 1980); *Rush v. United States*, 559 F.2d 455, 459 (7th Cir. 1977);

---

<sup>1</sup> The Court notes that Lawson filed a § 2255 motion on November 12, 2019.

*Groce*, 838 F. Supp. at 413-14. These minimal requirements do not impose a substantial burden on prisoners who desire their records be sent to them at government expense.

Defendant has not made the requisite showing that he has attempted to acquire the document through his retained counsel, Justin A. Kuehn, nor has he demonstrated through sufficient evidence that he is indigent. Therefore, the Motion is **DENIED**. If Defendant wishes to pay for a copy of the requested documents, he will need to send a letter to the Clerk of Court and request the cost of production.

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

**DATED: November 19, 2019**



**STACI M. YANDLE**  
**United States District Judge**